



“The Future History of the Church, Part 2”

by James Jacob Prasch

*“Your word is a lamp to my feet
And a light to my path.”
Psalm 119:105*



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Rome Then and Now

What happened during the Reformation was relatively mild in comparison to the tremendous revival taking place now in Roman Catholic countries, specifically in South America: In Santiago, Chile, 20,000 people leave the Roman Catholic church every week to become Pentecostals. In Guatemala, 10% of the population left the Roman Catholic church within ten years' time and became Pentecostals. In the Philippines it is the same; in the United States, the number of converted Roman Catholics is incredible. In Ireland, more Roman Catholics are now getting saved than Protestants. In Italy there are over 1,000 Assemblies of God churches, none of them small and practically all of them new. While the Assemblies of God denomination is failing in countries that had the Reformation, it is prospering in Catholic countries. We will observe that the Mary issue will be incendiary; "Great is Diana of Ephesus" – see Acts 19:23-34.

The Roman emperors were worshiped and God's people were killed for refusing to participate in it. 2 Thessalonians 2 and Revelation 13 speak of the same thing. The emperor worship of Rome prefigures worship of the Antichrist. The kissing of the Pope's ring and other similar practices are derived from emperor worship. Once again, in the Last Days the Antichrist, the emperor will demand to be worshiped in some way. Those who will not do so will be persecuted for their refusal.

Scripture notes in Acts 5:37, the nativity narratives, etc., that the Roman emperors took a census. When you really understand the way census was used in the Bible, you will understand why David's taking the census in Israel (1 Chr. 21) was even worse than his sin of adultery with Bathsheba. The Roman emperors used census to number people's heads and thus gain financial control of the world; this is what the Antichrist will also do. It happened in the time of the Early Church and it will happen again in the end. The worst emperors slaughtered the church and then turned against the Jews. It began with Nero in 62 A.D., and in 68-70 A.D. the tide turned against the Jews. In the 2nd Century emperors such as Diocletian, Marcus Aurelius, and Septimus Severitus were against the church, but then with Hadrian they went against the Jews from 120-132 A.D.

The early believers had an *imminent* eschatology; they believed that Jesus was coming back during their lifetime. We, too, will begin to see that happening. The general tide of world events politically at that time fulfilled specific eschatological prophecies. The events surrounding the destruction of the Temple, the burning of Rome, etc. – those things fulfilled prophecy. But once again, Jewish prophecy is pattern, and those same prophecies will again be fulfilled in the future. What I am basically saying is this: When you read the book of Acts, you're not only reading the history of the early church, you're also reading the history of the latter church. What happens to Jesus happens to the Apostles, happens to Paul, and happens to the early Christians; all of these things together teach what will happen to us. What happens to Jesus in His last days happens again to His Body in the Last Days. What happened in the Early Church will happen in the latter church. The Book of Acts happens again. Forty-eight percent of the Gospel of John deals with the last week of Jesus' life; the Passion narrative. All four gospels devote at least one-third of their time to what happened in the last days of Jesus' earthly life. If it is read the right way, the New Testament does the same with us, speaking a great deal about what will happen in the Last Days. Jesus was betrayed, crucified, and raised victorious. We, too, will be betrayed, crucified, and raised victorious.

Deception Then and Now

It is important to realize that the kinds of deceptions perpetrated by Satan against the Early Church are the kinds of deceptions he will use against the church in the Last Days. The same heresies, false doctrines, and deceptions that the devil introduced into Christianity in its early centuries make a comeback in the Last Days.

In the Early Church people with a low Christology – people who did not believe that Jesus was God – were called “Arians”. Today we call them Jehovah's Witnesses; the two are essentially the same.

In the Early Church they called the Sabbatarian and dietary legalists and Nomianists “Judaizers” (see Galatians). Today we call them Seventh-Day Adventists.

In the Early Church people who were hyper-Dispensationalist – who took Dispensationalism to a bizarre extreme and made a radical, tremendous separation between the Testaments – were called “Marcionites”. Today they are the Exclusive or Closed Brethren.

In the Early Church, the people who said that the Father was Jesus, the Son was Jesus, and the Spirit was Jesus were called “Sabaleans” or “Patripassionists”. Today we call them Jesus-Only Pentecostals, or United Pentecostals. There is nothing new under the sun.

Undoubtedly, however, of all these lies and the many others, the two most damaging were the Montanists and the Gnostics, who were related to each other. The Montanists had over-realized eschatology; they believed that the kingdom was now. They made many crazy predictions and prophecies that revival was coming to their capital or that Jesus was coming there Himself in Phrygia or modern-day Turkey. They had all manner of wild predictions, but the way they sucked people into it was by putting a heavy emphasis on signs and wonders. “The Apostles had these things, the Bible teaches them, so we should have them” was their philosophy. Irenaeus, the pre-Nicean church father, wrote against these people while yet defending what was right about them. He did say that signs and wonders and the gifts of the Spirit are Biblical; but this particular group was using them to get people to believe other bizarre things. The same is true today.

In the Early Church people like Tertullian, the church father – people you would never have expected to get caught up in crazy errors – did. Today, too, I find people I never would have expected being caught up in the same kinds of Kingdom Now ideas of Triumphalism, Restorationism, and Dominionism. It works the same way, with the emphasis laid on signs and wonders, etc.

These people in the Early Church made insane predictions that didn't happen and led to total anarchy. At any turning point in church history, this same Kingdom Now theology

has surfaced. The Montanists began to surface when the Roman Empire went into decline.

During the Renaissance, which was a very important turning point in the history of Europe, believers in Montanist doctrines were called the followers of Joachim of Fiore. This man, leader of Kingdom Now theology at that time, has such a similar philosophy to that of the Vineyard movement today that he could have written for their magazine. We see in them the same ideas, for example: there are supposedly three ages, the Age of the Father, the Age of the Son, and the Age of the Spirit; the Age of the Father being Old Testament Israel, the Age of the Son being the church age, and the Age of the Spirit being the latter-day rain, identified with their own movement. They believed they belonged to a new religious order that was going to take over all other religious orders. This is the same belief found today in John Wimber's Vineyard Movement.

During the Reformation, there were the Prophets of Zwickau. Now, if you're Brethren, Pentecostal, or Baptist, don't ever consider yourself a Protestant. If you had been around during the Reformation, the Protestants would have called you an "Anabaptist" and they would have killed you as fast as the Catholics would. Zwingli said, "So you want to be baptized again?" and cut a hole in the ice in Zurich in which they drowned the believers there who believed in believers' baptism. The followers of Luther, Calvin and Zwingli killed Anabaptists. If you're Anglican, Lutheran, Presbyterian, or Reformed, then you're a Protestant; but anything non-conformist is not Protestant.

The Anabaptists were in most ways much closer to the Scripture than the Reformers were. The Protestants ran around pretending they had rediscovered the Gospel, when in fact there were people who had never lost it. Long before Luther, Calvin, or Zwingli, there were people on the Continent such as John S. Huss and the Bohemian Brethren, or in England the followers of John Wycliffe, or the Waldensians who were around for centuries – all of whom were Bible-believing Christians. There were always people who understood the basic truth and knew the church at large had gotten away from it.

However, in the time of the Reformation something happened. Feudalism ended, and capitalism began. The decline of the Holy Roman Empire – which was neither holy nor Roman – was occurring, and that Empire was being replaced with the nation-state; people began saying “I am English”, “I am German”, “I am Scottish”, etc. Therefore, the Pope no longer had the political leverage to exterminate Christians and suppress the preaching of the Gospel in the way that he had throughout the Dark Ages. Additionally, Gutenberg invented the printing press. You no longer had the Vulgate, which was the Latin edition of the Bible that monks copied; instead you had people like Luther putting the Bible into German and Tyndale into English and so on, and Bibles could be mass-produced because of Gutenberg's invention. So the Bible went out, literacy increased, and the Pope lost his ability to stop the spread of the Gospel politically. That is why the Reformation happened. The only thing people like Luther, Calvin, and Zwingli did was get away with something that other people before them had always said, only the political and social circumstances were not ripe for them to live to tell about it. The idea that the Reformers rediscovered the Gospel is a perversion of history.

There were some Anabaptists whose capital was Muenster in Germany, near Holland. They followed these “prophets” called the Prophets of Zwickau, who made a lot of crazy predictions, prophecies, and practices, with excessive abuses of the gifts of the Spirit etc., which led to total anarchy. Today we have the same thing, only instead of the Prophets of Zwickau we have the Kansas City Prophets. After Paul Cain publicly made false predictions with John Wimber in England, the same people who witnessed these false prophecies will get on buses again to go hear a repeat performance by this man, who prophesied falsely in the name of the Lord. The Anglican bishop David Pitchers wrote a book called *Some Said it Thundered*, telling all Evangelical Anglicans to follow this guy. They did, and Paul Cain has since that time gone to Saddam Hussein, a man who has murdered God only knows how many tens of thousands of his own people, and apologized, repenting on behalf of the born-again Christians in the United States and Great Britain for “what we did to him”.

Proper Use of Midrash

Kingdom-Now theology has always surfaced at pivotal points in history – there is nothing new under the sun. Related to it is something really crazy: Gnosticism.

Alexandria was where the Judeo-Christian world met the Orient. It was where Zoroastrian priests, Jewish rabbis, Buddhist monks, and Christians converged with the exchange of ideas. At the onset of the Christian era, the Hellenistic ideas of someone named Philo had already begun to come into Judaism. This was picked up by some of the people in Alexandria who were Christians, especially Origen – possibly Clement of Alexandria, but certainly Origen. Let me explain.

Midrashically, in the Jewish way of handling Scripture, you use symbolism, typology, and allegory to illustrate and **illuminate** doctrine, without **ever** basing doctrine **on** it. Take the Passover as an example with the symbolism of the Last Supper. When you understand the Jewish Passover and the Last Supper as a Passover, the symbolism of the Jewish ritual in the Passover seder will help you understand the Lord's Supper on a much deeper level than you otherwise could. The purpose of allegory, typology and symbolism is to **illuminate** doctrine on a deeper level, **never** to be the basis of doctrine in itself.

Very briefly: A Jewish Christian reading John's Gospel in the 1st Century would have read John 1, 2, and 3 and he would have said that it was, of course, a midrash on Genesis 1, 2, and 3. He would have said that John 1, 2, and 3 narrated the New Creation, while Genesis narrated the Creation; therefore Genesis 1, 2, and 3 and John 1, 2, and 3 are a midrashic parallel.

- God walks the Creation in Genesis, and God walks on the earth in the New Creation in John. The Spirit moves on the water and brings forth the Creation in Genesis, and the Spirit moves on the water and brings forth the New Creation in John.
- God comes to separate the light from the darkness in the Creation in Genesis, and He does so again in the New Creation in John.

- In the Creation in Genesis you have the small light and the great light; in the New Creation you have *Johanan Hamadvil* -- John the Baptist (the small light), and *Yeshua ha Mashiach*, Jesus the Messiah (the great light).

Midrashically, the fig tree is a metaphor for the Tree of Life that is in the Garden of Eden. The Tree of Life is in the garden, and the fig tree is in John. So midrashically, when Jesus sees Nathaniel “under the fig tree”, in Jewish metaphor Jesus was not merely saying to Nathaniel, "I saw you under a literal fig tree", although he did; He was saying midrashically, "I saw you from the creation; from the foundation of the world I foreknew you." That **illustrates** the truth; the Bible directly states elsewhere that there are “those whom He foreknew from the creation of the world”. (Rom. 8:29) I am not a Calvinist, but there is a truth in it. The midrash **illustrates** that truth, but it is not the **basis** of it.

In the same way, "This is the cup of the new covenant in My blood", as Jesus said at the Last Supper, (1 Co. 11:25) shows that the Passover meal **illustrates** the doctrine of atonement while not being the basis for it. That is the way in which Jewish hermeneutics uses allegory. It's totally wrong to reject allegory in the way the Reformers did because the deeper things of the Scriptures will never be understood if we do that. On the other hand, however, it is just as wrong and even dangerous to base doctrine on it.

Gnosticism

What the Gnostics did was this: They claimed a subjective mystical insight into the types and allegories in Scripture, then reinterpreted the plain meaning of the Bible in light of this “*gnosis*”, which is the Greek word for spiritual revelation. They claimed to have special knowledge, and if you didn't see it, they would say you were under spiritual deception or in rebellion.

Roman Catholicism is based on Gnosticism. The Pope erroneously claims to be the successor of Peter; to have your hermeneutics right, you must first have your ecclesiology right. In other words, only the Pope, the Magisterium of the Church, can interpret the Bible. Therefore, although the plain meaning of Luke 1:47 is that Mary says she needs a Savior, Catholicism replies, “Yes, but you don't have the *gnosis*; the Pope

has it because he's the heir of Peter, and he says that Mary does not need a Savior because she was conceived without sin.”

Hasidic Judaism is the same way. Their rabbis are called “*rebbe*s” and they're the descendants of someone called Bal Shem Tov, the Besch in Judaism, a Jewish Gnostic who was into things like astral projection. The Hasidic Jews contend with each other about whose rebbe is the real descendant of Besch; who really has the spirit of the Besch. It's a form of reincarnation that comes from Hinduism. Therefore, for Hasidic Jews there are two ways to God: The Torah and the rebbe, the righteous one. The rebbe goes to God through Torah; you go to God through the rebbe. What the Torah says is not important; what the rebbe says about it is important.

Similarly, with Catholicism it is not what the New Testament says that is important, but rather what the Pope says about it that matters. With Sufi Moslems, it's the suf; with Shi'a Moslems, it's the imam, and what the imam says about the Koran. With Zoroastrians, it's their priesthood. With Hindus, it's the Brahman priests, the highest order of the caste system, or the guru. He goes to Vishnu and Krishna, you go through him. With Shamanism it's the shaman. To Tibetan Buddhists the essential figure is the Dalai Lama. All of these groups follow Gnosticism.

The essential issue in these forms of Gnosticism therefore becomes, “Who is your guru, who is your pope, who is your imam, who is your rebbe, who is your suf, who is your lama or your priest or your shaman?” In Restorationism, the corresponding question is, “Who is your apostle, who is your prophet?”

Modern-Day Gnostics

Joel chapter 2 is the basis for the Manchild/ Manifest Sons of God doctrines of Restorationism. Let's take a look at John Wimber's exposition of Joel chapter 2. Remember that Jewish prophecy is pattern, and therefore somehow this passage is about the Last Days. However, in its historical context it is speaking of Nebuchadnezzar's invasion. Joel 2 says this:

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*"Blow the trumpet in Zion,
Sound an alarm...
...There is a great and mighty people...
There has never been anything like it,
Nor will there ever be again
To the years of many generations.
A fire consumes before them,
And a flame after them.
The land is like the Garden of Eden before them,
And desolate wilderness after them.
Nothing escapes them."*

That is what John Wimber, Paul Cain, David Pitchers, Gerald Coates, and the people in the house churches who follow them have said that the church triumphant is going to be. But let's look more closely

*"Their appearance is like the appearance of horses;
Like warhorses they run...
...They rush on the city,
They run on the walls."*

It goes on from there to describe this army as locusts. The Restorationists say that the church triumphant will be this army of devouring locusts, that they will conquer all. But now let's look at verse 20:

*"I will remove the northern army far from you,
And will drive it into a parched and desolate land,
Its vanguard in the Eastern Sea
And its rearguard into the Western Sea.
And its stench will arise, and its foul smell will come up,
For it has done great things."*

God is going to destroy and judge this army because it is evil the way He judged and destroyed Nebuchadnezzar's army. That is the context exegetically, grammatically, historically, or any other way you would like to look at it. But John Wimber came along claiming a gnosis saying, "No, that's not what it means – it's the church triumphant"; if you don't see this, he will simply say that you are under spiritual deception. If you disagree, you'll be accused of having the spirit of Antichrist.

Another man who is guilty of this kind of thing is Andrew Shearman, though he is more eisegetical than actually Gnostic. He will take a text which says that the Gospel is preached until John, but then with the Kingdom, men enter it violently; he will twist that text. (Mt. 11:12) What "violently" means here in its original Greek context is "pressed into". It can be compared to this hypothetical situation: If you were taking a boat across the Irish Sea from Hollyhead in Wales to Dublin, and you put on a life jacket and got into a lifeboat, the other passengers would think you were crazy. On these ferryboats there are pubs, discotheques, casinos, etc. The people are thereby amusing themselves, while you sit in the lifeboat with your life jacket on, trying to encourage people to put on life jackets and join you because it will add to the comfort and pleasure of their trip. They would say you were nuts; but as soon as the warning whistle goes off and these people know the boat is sinking and they're doomed, they'll be pressing into the lifeboats and trying to get life jackets on in order to save their necks.

The Law and the Prophets are taught until John; in Galatians the Law is called our teacher because it teaches us that we are condemned and in need of salvation. (Gal. 3:24) This is what the text means, but Mr. Shearman says, "No, this is the church triumphant. **We're** the mighty men who are going to do the conquering." This is nonsensical and doesn't come close to what the text means. There is no way anyone can read that text in its original context and come up with such a stupid conclusion, yet this is what the man teaches, and if **you** don't see it **you're** "under spiritual deception". Again, it's not what the Bible says that's important, but rather what the person with the gnosis claims.

Two Forms of Gnosticism

This is what the Gnostics do today, and it is exactly what they did in the Early Church as well. In the time of the Early Church there were two forms of Gnosticism: the totally pagan form and the form that got into the church under the leadership of people such as Basil and Valentinus. The same applies today; there are two forms of Gnosticism. The utterly pagan form is the New Age movement; Gnosticism is really what the New Age movement is. It may have occult packaging and so on, but the core of it is Gnostic. The kind of Gnosticism getting into the church today is Restorationism. All of the visualization techniques among many other popular things Restorationists embrace – such as Joyce Huges's books – are New Age ideas, totally alien to the Bible. Using breathing exercises for prayer, as she describes, comes from yoga. She states also that the exercises of Ignatius Loyola should be used as a model for Christian prayer. Ignatius Loyola was the founder of the Jesuits, a religious order designed to stop the spread of the Gospel in the counter-Reformation. He was a man whose order is responsible for the death, torture, and murder of probably a half-million Christians. Yet his shamanistic exercises are being upheld in today's church as a model for Christian prayer! These are New Age ideas creeping into the church. These were also the kinds of deception faced by the Early Church; the same ones have come back.

It doesn't matter whether you call it "Arianism" or Jehovah's Witnesses; it is the same thing. Charles Taze Russell and Judge Rutherford, the founders of the Jehovah's Witness movement, claimed a gnosis. If you don't agree with them, you're under deception. Roman Catholicism = Gnosticism. Shia Islam = Gnosticism. Sufi Islam = Gnosticism. Zoroastrianism = Gnosticism. Hinduism = Gnosticism. Shamanism = Gnosticism. The house churches = Gnosticism.

Just look at the damage that heavy shepherding and similar practices have caused people. This Restorationism is a natural bedfellow for all kinds of other errors, one of which is heavy shepherding. We deal with this more in depth in a separate teaching; I am simply saying here that it was a deception in the Early Church, and it is again becoming a deception now. A person who claims the gnosis is naturally going to become

a heavy shepherd; what else could he be? Jesus, however, said that One is your Teacher, Who is in heaven (Mt. 23:8-10).

God will do a new thing. If a couple has four children and they decide to have a fifth (God help them), God will do a new thing, but they will get the fifth child in the same way in which they got the first four. When God does a new thing, it will always be in character with the way He has always done things. What Gnostics will say is that everything can be abrogated because God is going to do a new thing in the Last Days; that is true, but it will never be out of character with the way He has always done things.

There is a lot wrong with abortion, but one of the things that bothers me most is the waiting list of couples who are trying to adopt a baby. This list is three miles long, while other people are killing children. There is no such thing as an unwanted baby. People will adopt handicapped children or just about any child if they want one badly enough; yet other people are killing them.

If a couple really loves each other, and they want to share their love with a baby, the mother never says, "I just can't face labor. I can't face morning sickness or contractions; therefore I am not going to have the baby. It's too miserable." The only thing she's thinking of is pushing the baby in a pram, taking him to the park on the swings, and going to the zoo to show him the zebras and the monkeys. Morning sickness and labor are not what occupy her mind; that's just what has to be gone through in order to get the child.

I'm glad I am not a female. I watched one of my children being born, and kept my eye on the monitor that measures the intensity and frequency of contractions. Every time the thing started moving I told my wife, "This is the last one, this is it! I wouldn't lie to you, baby," but I was lying. Forget those rugby players at Wiggin; women are the strongest creatures in the world! If one of those rugby players had a baby he'd be out for the season.

Increasing Tremors

Birth pangs and earth tremors – but particularly birth pangs – are the most common things Scripture uses to describe what is going to happen to the church before Jesus comes. Think of the nature of birth pangs: Contractions become more frequent and more severe, while letting up for a while in between. They are at their worst right before the baby is born. The same applies to the Last Days; the pressure grows worse and worse, and though it might let up for a while, it returns and continues in that pattern until the birth occurs. That's what Revelation is about; certainly that's what Jeremiah talks about. Jeremiah refers frequently to birth pangs; he is a prophet who prophesied for his own time, for the first coming of Jesus, and for the Last Days, sometimes almost in the same breath. Whenever you see something in Scripture about birth pangs, the Holy Spirit is trying to reveal something about what will happen to the church in the Last Days.

1 Thessalonians 5 is another example.

"When they are saying 'peace and safety', then destruction will come upon them like birth pangs upon a woman with child, and they shall not escape."

Read Jeremiah; whenever you see the idea of birth pangs, it is eschatologically significant. In addition, whatever you have in the science of obstetrics has its parallel in the science of seismology. Earth tremors behave in much the same way as birth pangs; before there is a major shift of plates causing a big earthquake, a number of smaller tremors precede it. They tend to become more frequent and more intense before the final quake actually occurs. In America and Japan they spend astronomical sums of money trying to discern patterns in tremors in order to predict earthquakes. But they do know that tremors operate under much the same principle as birth pangs. Tremors, too, teach something about what will happen in the Last Days.

The tremors increase, the birth pangs increase, and then the baby comes. Once the baby arrives, and the obstetrician or midwife hands the baby to the mother, all the pain, misery, and mess of labor and delivery is quickly forgotten. The only important thing is

the baby, who is well worth it. A woman could be in labor for four weeks, but as soon as she has her baby it's all forgotten.

It will be the same way when Jesus comes; as soon as He appears, all pain and misery is forgotten. We should think about Jesus coming; we don't have to consider the tribulation that goes before it, just as a mother anticipates her child's birth rather than dreading labor pains. Yet we must realize that tribulation is going to happen in the Last Days; just as a mother realizes there is no getting around the birth process.

Examples Past and Present

What happened with the Maccabees and Antiochus Epiphanes happens again to Israel and the church in the Last Days in some way. The book of Daniel also happens again. What happened in the days of the Maccabees was this: a lot of Jews compromised with the Seleucids, allowing Hellenism and “*Avodat Zara*”, in Hebrew, or foreign worship, to begin taking place in the city of God and ultimately in the house of God. Things wouldn't have gotten that far if so many Jews hadn't been willing to compromise. The way the Maccabees stood up against it and others began joining them teaches something about what is going to happen when the Antichrist manifests. Antiochus Epiphanes did not simply come one day, slaughter a pig in the Temple, and set up an image of Zeus and of himself to be worshiped. Nor is that the way the future abomination of desolations will come. Things build up toward that point; the Jews compromised and compromised until one day things had gone so far they could no longer put a stop to it.

The same thing is happening now. The Church of England is a church where someone who will not agree to sprinkle babies for infant baptism cannot be ordained a minister, but someone who is prepared to deny the Resurrection of Jesus Christ can be consecrated a bishop, with two-thirds of the other bishops defending him – including Evangelicals. Canterbury Cathedral is a site of interfaith worship. The Greek word “*demonoi*”, Hebrew word “*shiddim*” – other gods are demons, as Scripture directly states in Deuteronomy and in 1 Corinthians. (Dt. 32:17; 1 Co. 10:20) Hindu worship takes place in Canterbury Cathedral; 2,000 Anglican bishops signed a petition to stop it, but the Evangelical Archbishop stated that he “respects all religions”. That is an abomination of

desolations in the house of God. People give up and give up and give up, continuing to compromise until it is too late.

In the same way, don't expect to see the Antichrist being worshiped in the church overnight. It doesn't happen that way, it happens the way it did in the time of the Maccabees, with God's people compromising repeatedly until things have gone too far to be stopped. Daniel 11:33-35 says this:

"Those who have understanding among the people will rise up and give understanding to the many. But they will be persecuted . . ."

(We discuss this on the *Christmas/ Hanukah* tape.) What happened with the Maccabees happens again in the Last Days. The book of Daniel is replayed; Jesus said directly that when we see the abomination of desolations being set up, we could know that our redemption draws near. (Lk. 21:28) What happened with the Maccabees as Daniel predicted it has to happen again; Jesus said so directly. When you read Daniel, read Maccabees in the Apocrypha and see what happens. When you do, you will be reading about one of the main things that is going to happen to the church again. There will be an abomination of desolations.

The Physical Reflects the Deeper Spiritual

There are different words in Greek for "church" or "temple": *oikos*, *naos*, *hieron*; in Hebrew it's *ha hekal*, *beth mishkatn*, *beth migdash*. In no less than seven places, the New Testament says that the church is the temple. When Jesus died, and the Temple veil was torn from the ceiling to the ground, a physically visible event did happen in the Temple. However, what was important was not that the Temple veil was torn; what mattered was what it **meant**: that sinful man was no longer separated from holy God because Jesus paid the price for our sins. (We deal with this on the *Typology of the Temple* tape.) The old-time Brethren emphasized the typology of the Temple and in many fundamental respects, because of their emphasis on typology, the old-time Brethren were probably closer than the Gentile church has ever been to beginning to interpret the Bible as a Jewish book the way the Early Church did. Maybe they didn't go

far enough; maybe a lot of things, but they were closer than the Gentile church otherwise ever got to reading this Jewish book as a Jewish book.

Nonetheless, when Jesus died and the Temple veil was torn, the physical event reflected a deeper spiritual one. If the Temple is rebuilt – and I don't say it won't be; there are many supposedly secret excavations going on in Jerusalem that everybody knows about – and if this image is set up in it, it will only be a **reflection** of a deeper spiritual reality. Make no mistake: the Antichrist will be worshiped in the so-called church and it will happen in the same way it happened with the Maccabees. Repeated compromise on the part of God's people until it's too late.

Look at the Church of England today as a modern example. They deal with this issue of women priests, yet the New Testament is clear that **every** Christian is a priest. If you are not a priest, you are not a Christian. The issue is not even Biblical, yet over the ordination of female priests people are standing up to walk out. Did you see anyone stand up to walk out when a bishop denied the Resurrection and Virgin Birth of Jesus, or when homosexuality was approved? Did you see anybody stand up to walk out over demons being worshiped in Canterbury Cathedral? No. People will only walk out over something not Scriptural. And where do they walk out to? Rome. That's almost like someone going to Brighton for a holiday and saying, "This place is a dump; I'm going to Blackpool".

Restraining Evil

Look at 2 Thessalonians 2:

"We request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, that you may not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed by a spirit, a message, or a letter as it were from us, to the effect that the Day of the Lord has come. Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the apostasia, the falling-away, comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, who opposes and exalts himself against

every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the Temple of God, displaying himself as God."

We see in Isaiah and Ezekiel that Satan wants to be worshiped as God like the king of Babylon, etc.

"Do you not remember, when I was with you I was telling you these things? And you do not know what restrains him now, so that in his time he may be revealed; for the mystery of lawlessness is already at work. Only He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way."

There are three things that restrain evil: One is human government, which God ordains for that purpose. The New Testament tells Christians to pray for the authorities. The early Christians even prayed for the emperors because they knew that if the emperor was not being influenced by God's Spirit, he would be influenced by another spirit. I don't like politicians much, but I certainly pray for them, because I know that if I am not praying for them, they will come under other influences and will make it bad for us. When the Antichrist comes, human government will be given into his hand.

To understand how this happened in the Early Church, we must look at emperors such as Caligula, who persecuted the church. Another example is the medieval papacy, when the government was given into its hands. What makes the Great Tribulation unique is this: God is the God of history. But somehow, Scripture says that the Antichrist will seek to change the times. (Dan. 7:25) For a brief period of three and a half years, equating to the ministry of Jesus, the lordship of history will be given into the hands of Satan within certain parameters. Christians often make the mistake of saying that the last seven years of history will be the Great Tribulation. The Bible calls it the seventieth week of Daniel and "*ha Tekufot ha Tsurot Yacov*", "the time of Jacob's Trouble". Only the **second** half of that time can be proven to be the Great Tribulation. There will be tribulation before it, but the second half is much worse. If you want to say that the church will not go through the Great Tribulation, that's one thing; but that's not to say the church won't

enter the last seven years. Neither is it to say that they won't be taken out sometime after the beginning of those seven years.

If you or I should die, God forbid, on the road tonight – Jesus came for us. We should always live our lives as if He could come for us at any moment, because He can. Whether He returns tonight or a million years from now has no effect on our walk with Him, because in any case He can come for us at any moment. But the Resurrection and the Rapture cannot happen until the identity of the Antichrist is revealed to the faithful: "Until the man of lawlessness is revealed".

So the first thing that restrains evil, human government is given into Antichrist's hands. The second thing that restrains evil is the church preaching the Gospel.

Understand about the metaphor of the night:

- Jesus said, "Work while you have the light, for night will come when no man can work." (Jn. 9:4)
- He's coming "like a thief in the night" (1 Th. 5:2)
- Is He coming "in the second watch of the night, or the third"? (Mt. 24:42-44)
- "Watchman, watchman, how far is the night?" (Is. 21:11)
- The ten virgins needed oil in their lamps in order to see in the night. (Mt. 25:1)
- The Apostles were arrested at night, and so was Jesus. (Lk. 22:54) That means something.
- In the Song of Solomon, the bridegroom comes for the bride during the night. (Song 3:1-5)

The parable of the wise and foolish virgins, in Matthew 25, was told at Passover, at the same time the Song of Solomon was being read in the synagogues. In the Song of Solomon, it is evident by the gender of the Hebrew text whether it is the bride, the bridegroom, or the hosts of heaven singing the choruses. The story hinges on the two dreams of the bride in chapters three and five. In chapter three, she is ready for the bridegroom to come; in chapter five, she is not. When Jesus returns, it is either the church's best dream, or it's her worst nightmare. In Judaism, Nisan, the month of

Passover, is the month of redemption. This is when the Song of Solomon is read in the synagogue, and that is what Jesus was preaching from at Passover in Matthew 25. The parable of the wise and foolish virgins replays what was being read in the synagogues that very week.

The night is the most frequent Biblical metaphor for the Great Tribulation. When Jesus was betrayed, it was night. Remember: His last days are like our last days. This night is coming. The Holy Spirit, we are told in John 14, convicts the world concerning sin. Somehow, He restrains evil and He unites the church and empowers us to preach the Gospel. God's Spirit "will not forever strive with man". (Gen. 6:3) Jesus said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." (Heb.13:5) God's Spirit will never leave the hearts of His people. He will not be taken from us, but He will be taken from the world. In the book of Revelation (without being a Dispensationalist), God goes back to behaving the way He did in the Old Testament. Grace, as it were, comes to an end.

There is a difference between the Spirit **indwelling** and the Spirit **outpoured**. The Spirit indwelt the disciples in John 20:22; Jesus breathed on them – *pneuma* in Greek – and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit". The Holy Spirit then indwelt them, but He was not outpoured on the church until the Day of Pentecost, thus empowering them to preach the Gospel. He also brought conviction on the world as John 14 said He would. That will end. In other words, God's Spirit will be the reserve of His people. God will never take His Spirit from us, but His Spirit will no longer convict the world and will no longer empower the church to minister the Truth to the world in the way He does now. Grace comes to an end and His mercy is reserved for those who are His, though He does turn His redemptive attention towards Israel and the Jews during this period through the Great Tribulation. However, that is not to say that the church will be removed at the beginning of it. Too many people equate the taking of the Church in the Rapture with the taking of the Holy Spirit; that is not true – the Spirit indwells and the Spirit is outpoured. There is a gap.

Between the Ascension and the Day of Pentecost there was a gap. The Spirit indwelt God's people during that time, but He was not yet poured out and was not convicting the

world. The converse happens in the Last Days. Jesus ascended into heaven and sent the Holy Spirit to be outpoured; in the time of the end, the Holy Spirit leaves, is no longer outpoured, and sends Jesus. God does not take His Spirit from us, but He is taken from the world. This period is the Great Tribulation; Satan is no longer restrained, and the church is rescued out of it – we do not go through the worst part of it. It says in Job,

"In six tribulations He will keep us, in seven He will deliver us". (Job 5:19)

I am quite convinced that the removal of the church takes place between the sixth and seventh seals in the book of Revelation.

There are a number of things in the Bible that teach about this period of time. The first is the period of time between Jesus breathing on the Apostles and the Day of Pentecost. Christ had risen, the victory was won, and His Spirit indwelt His people. But the church was not yet empowered to deal with the world, nor was the Holy Spirit restraining the world's evil or bringing conviction on the world. That happens again in the end. His Spirit will be only with us.

We have to understand the Church of Smyrna, as seen in Revelation 2. "*Smyrna*" comes from the Greek word "*myrrh*", which was used in anointing bodies for burial. The way the Roman government acted in declaring every religion legal – *religio licita* – except ours will happen again in the end. The government in league with the Antichrist will declare every other religion *religio licita*, but come against us. The church of Smyrna is another thing that teaches about the experiences of the Last Days church.

Spiritual Seduction

The third thing is more complicated. We must understand Elijah; whether this means a man or something else in this context is an issue I cannot deal with now – we have a separate teaching on it. But it says in James that Elijah stopped the rain for three and a half years. That rain represents the outpouring of the Holy Spirit when it stops during the second half of the three and a half years. 1,260 days by the Jewish lunar calendar; two times, time and a half time. Elijah fed the Gentile woman during that period.

Now, look at what happens in the story as told in I Kings: Jezebel. (On the *Antichrist* tapes we develop this at length.) There are good girls, and there are bad girls. Whenever you see a “good girl” in the Bible, it teaches us something about God's woman, Israel or the church in some way. Shulamite in the Song of Solomon, Eve, Rachel, Rebekah, Sarah, Mary, Deborah, Jael, Esther – the good women in the Bible all teach something about the Bride of Christ in some aspect. The bad women in the Bible, on the other hand, teach something about the spirit of false religion, the bride of Satan. She is personified by Jezebel in Revelation. Certainly Queen Athaliah in the book of Kings is another example; her behavior is very much like that of Nero's mother. The way that Nero's mother influenced him negatively, becoming part of the cause of his turning against the church is the same way in which Queen Athaliah influenced her son in the book of Kings. All of the wicked women in the Bible teach something about that ultimate one; the spirit of false religion.

Let's look at Proverbs, please, and we'll read it midrashically: Now, I don't suggest that the teaching of Proverbs is not about a literal prostitute; it is. But in Midrash you have a difference between *peshat* and *peshet*. *Peshat* is the literal whoredom and idolatry and spiritual seduction is the *peshet*. This is, of course, about literal prostitution, adultery and immorality. But the character of this woman, or these women, describes the spirit of false religion. Very briefly, let's look at Proverbs 31. In verses 10-31 we find a description of Solomon's ideal woman. She goes to a field, like a mission field (v. 16). She gives food to her household, she considers a field and buys it, and she's a delight to her husband. In v. 18, she senses that her gain is good and her lamp does not go out at night. Is that familiar? That is the good girl. Now let's look at some of the bad girls.

Who said bad girls are more fun? They're not more fun, they're deadly. Let's look at Proverbs 5:

"My son, give attention to my wisdom"

– remember, people without God's wisdom are going to be deceived by false religions –

*"that you may observe discretion, and your lips may reserve knowledge.
For the lips of an adulteress drip honey, and smoother than oil is her
speech"*

– oil is what you use to anoint people with. The devil is very good at counterfeiting anointing; how does he do it? With smoothness and suavity. The hype artists from America are smooth talkers. They're substituting anointing with hype, and people don't know the difference.

"But in the end, she is bitter as wormwood."

Take as an example a poor drunken sailor on payday. On his way back from the pub after last call, he sees a prostitute and goes with her, only to find out two weeks later he has contracted AIDS. That's the kind of metaphor the Scripture is using here.

"In the end, she is as bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword"

– look at that! The devil can counterfeit God's truth. Remember, in the Old Testament the devil is called "Star of the Morning" (Is. 14:12); Jesus is called the "Bright and Morning Star". (Rev. 2:28) (We go into this on the *Antichrist* tapes.)

"Her feet go down to death, her steps lay hold of Sheol; she does not ponder the path of life, her ways are unstable. Now then, my son, listen to me: do not depart from the word of my mouth. Keep your way far from her; don't go near the door of her house, lest you give your vigor to others and your years to the cruel one, lest strangers be filled with your strength and your hard-earned goods go to the house of an alien."

Who gave his strength to a wicked woman? Samson. Delilah is a type of the wicked woman; she seduces God's man into giving up his strength. The way that she brought Samson to destruction, but how God revived him in victory teaches something about the

end. Sometimes you'll have a guy who really loves Jesus, who is sincere in his faith and his walk with God, but he's a sucker for some nasty woman. That can happen to people; however, it can also happen to the church: spiritual seduction.

We have to understand the relationship between idolatry and adultery. Israel's husband was to be Yahweh; the Hebrew word for "husband" is "*ba'al*", the same word as "master". The abomination of desolations is called *shikutz ha meshomen* in Aramaic. *Shikutz* comes from the Hebrew word "*shihetz*", meaning "slimy reptile", or "detestable thing". Satan has two modes of attack in Revelation: the serpent and the dragon. The dragon is the persecutor, the serpent the seducer. The way that the serpent beguiled Eve in the Garden of Eden is the same way in which Satan tries to deceive the church.

Women are generally much more vulnerable to spiritual seduction than men are because they are more sensitive and God can speak to them more easily than He can to men, and anything that God intends for good Satan will twist and use for evil. God instructed that women have their heads covered; not literally covered, but because Eve was vulnerable to spiritual seduction, a woman needs to be under male headship in a protective sense. In that culture it meant wearing a headscarf, but the principle is true in every culture. I know a woman who always wears a head covering yet has the biggest mouth I've ever heard. If her husband dares open his mouth, he gets a smack. That woman's head is not covered.

Adultery = Idolatry

The word *shikutz* occurs many times in the Bible; unfortunately we usually translate it "your detestable things": "O daughter of Zion, you have played the harlot. You have profaned My sanctuary with your detestable things." That word is *shekitzim*; it has to do with Satan as a deceiver, but is almost always applied to Baal-worship. Baal, again, is the Hebrew word for "husband". The abomination of desolations will express Satan's desire to be God as we see with the king of Babylon in the Old Testament. He will attempt to take God's woman through spiritual seduction. That's what the abomination of desolations means: Satan using spiritual deception to try to take God's woman. Adultery and idolatry go together. Idolatry equals spiritual adultery. That is why when Israel goes

into the sin of idolatry God says, "O daughter of Zion, you've played the harlot, you've gone after other lovers, etc." The language of marital infidelity is used to describe idolatry.

Proverbs 7:

"My son, keep my words and treasure my commandments within you. Keep my commandments and live, and my teaching as the apple of your eye. Bind them on your fingers, write them on the tablets of your heart, say to Wisdom, 'You are my sister', and call understanding your intimate friend"

Remember, in the Last Days, understanding and faithfulness become closely associated. Why? Because those who don't have it will be vulnerable to deception.

"That they may keep you from an adulteress, from the foreigner who flatters with her words. For at the window of my house, I looked through my lattice and saw among the naïve, and discerned among the youths, a young man lacking sense passing through the streets near her corner. And he takes the way to her house in the twilight."

When? In the twilight, the evening. Remember, *qol veh homer*. Things that are always true become **especially** true in the Last Days. Spiritual seduction has always been around, but it intensifies before Jesus comes.

"And behold, a woman comes to meet him, dressed as a harlot and cunning of heart. She is boisterous and rebellious; her feet do not remain at home. She is now in the streets, now on the squares, and lurks by every corner. She seizes him and kisses him, and with a brazen face she says to him, 'I was due to offer peace offerings today that I have paid my vows. Therefore I have come out to meet you, to seek your presence

*earnestly, and I have found you. I have spread my couch with coverings,
with colored linens of Egypt"*

What is Egypt a figure of? The world.

"I have sprinkled my bed with myrrh"

It's a deathbed, though it smells nice. A corpse can be made to look pretty good, but it is no less dead with cosmetics.

*"Come, let us drink our fill of love till morning; let us delight ourselves with
caresses."*

Now let's read verses 19 and 20:

*"For the man is not at home; he has gone on a long journey, he has
taken a bag of money with him and at full moon he will come."*

And she goes on to deceive the guy. You see, she knows that the man is not at home; she knows that Jesus has gone on a long journey, and that at "full moon" He will come. What, again, is full moon? The time at which the moon is reflecting the maximum amount of light from the sun. The Bible will have to be understood at some point, that despite the darkness there will be a ray of sun. But for those who do not have oil in their lamps, it will then be too late to go out and buy it. We must get the oil **now**. †††